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KIND CAUTION

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P R O F A N E

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KIND CAUTION

TO

PROFANE SWEARERS.

NOTHING can be more piercing to the Heart of a *Christian*, than to hear the Multitudes of Oaths and profane Speeches which proceed out of the Mouths of many People, without any Sense of the Evil they do, or fear of any thing they must suffer for so doing. To hear the *Great and Terrible Name of God* polluted by Men, which is adored by Angels; and to consider how often that *sacred Name* is profaned in common Discourse, which we are scarce worthy once to mention in our prayers, is very horrible to all that have not lost the Sense of a *Supreme Being*. I do such therefore I here apply myself, with the Fear of God and Faithfulness of a Friend, beseeching them to consider, with the Reason that is common to Man, the few Things I have to lay before them, with Reference to their dangerous Case; or as yet, serious Consideration and

Repentance may prevent the everlasting Misery that is coming upon them.

1. In the first Place, it must appear the Sense of all Mankind, the rashest and foolishhest Thing in the World, to provoke the Wrath of an infinitely powerful Being, and that merely for the Sake of a few needless and impertinent Words; which he may be justly provoked to cast you off in a Moment, and to cast you into remediless Torments. This is what no Man dares to do in Cases of less Danger. You dare not revile a General at the Head of his Army; no, nor rouse a sleeping Lion when you are within the Reach of his Paws. And is the Almighty God the only contemptible Being in your Account, that may be provoked without Fear, and offended without Punishment? Do you not read what he hath annexed to his *Third Commandment*? namely, *That he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain*; that is, that He will certainly and terribly punish such as profane it. And you are every Minute in Danger of this: for God is a righteous Judge, and will do as he hath said.

2. And in the next Place, your Baseness and Ingratitude is as great as your Danger; for it is a most senseless Thing

to despise that Almighty Being which you at other Times adore. Is it not a ridiculous Folly to fall on your Knees to God one Hour, and to blaspheme Him the next? One would not think that this could be done by any one that has Sense or Consideration. For it is perfectly horrible to the Reason of Man, that any one should defy *the God that made him, and in whose Hand his Breath is*, and by whom he will be made infinitely happy, or unspeakably miserable, to all Eternity.

3. This is such an Extremity of Sin, as can only be matched in Hell, where all are desperate, and without Hope of Mercy. The damned Devils, and the Souls of Men in Hell, may be supposed to rave and blaspheme in their Torment, because they know that their *Chains of Darknefs are everlasting*, and can never be knocked off. But for Man, that swims in the River of God's Goodness, and is visited with fresh Presents of his Love every Moment; for this favourite Creature to *set his Mouth against the Heavens*, and to blaspheme a gracious, a patient, a bountiful God, is a Height of Sin which exceeds the Blackness of Hell itself.

A 3. And

4. And all this is done against God, without so much as pleasing any one of our Senses. It is a tasteless and fruitless Sin. It brings no Pleasure to the Palate, nor Gain to the Purse. And it may even puzzle the profane Person himself to tell us for what it is he sells his Soul. Indeed he does not *sell* it at all in this Case: He prodigally gives away his Soul, without Repentance, to the Devil; and parts with a blessed Eternity for nothing.

5. And it is further to be considered That the Tongue of Man is his *Glory* and human Speech a Sort of Miracle in Nature: And it is given to Man, that he might glorify God who gave it to him. And will you, dare you, pervert the Use of so divine a Gift? Do but consider how wonderful a Thing the Speech of Man is, which by the little different Motions of the Tongue and Lips, does plainly and distinctly pronounce Millions of Words: Now, to abuse such an excellent Faculty, is much worse than to be wholly deprived of it, so that the Blasphemer is viler than the very Beasts: And the Time may come when he shall wish that he had been born as dumb as they, or that his Lips had

been perpetually closed, rather than to have opened them to his own Confusion and Condemnation.

6. And it is a very unhappy Circumstance of their Sin, that the Returns of it are frequent. Though it is of so horrible a Nature, and of such infinite Guilt, yet it may be repeated many Times in a Minute; yea, we find some multiplying their Oaths in the same Breath. In many other gross Sins it cannot be so: If a Man be overcome with Drink, there must be a considerable Space of Time ere he can be so again; or if he be given to profane the *Sacred Day of our LORD*, he cannot do it every Day. But the *Profane Swearer* is ready for another Oath, almost before the Sound of the first is out of our Ears. Yea, some double and treble them in one Sentence, even so as to confound the Sense of what they say by an horrible Din of Blasphemy. Ah! what a vast Heap of these heinous Sins lie at every common Swearer's Door! It would be apt to sink him almost to Despair, if he could see the whole Sum of them. And O! what a *seared and senseless Conscience* has he, that feels not this mountainous weight?

7. Indeed

7. Indeed this outrageous Treatment of God's holy Name, seems to be one of the utmost Efforts of the Malice of Men against him. His *Being* is above their Reach, and his Happiness unchangeable, and cannot be molested. But his *Name* may be profaned, or glorified by Men. But ah! with what Spite and Rancour do profane People treat it? And therefore, how just is that terrible Threat, *Deut. xxviii. 58. If thou shalt not fear this glorious and fearful Name, THE LORD THY GOD, he will make thy Plagues wonderful.*

8. For hereby you harden *Infidels* against the Christian Religion. It cannot be expected that they should honour your God, when you yourselves despise Him: or that any should embrace your Religion, when you yourselves trample it under your Feet. Yea, with Grief, and Shame, and Horror be it spoken, it is by Reason of such *scandalous Impieties* as these, that our holy Religion (the best and purest in itself) is become contemptible amongst the Heathen; and that the blessed Name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and his Doctrine, are despised. But *Who be to them by whom these Offences come*: Such as never heard

the

the Name of CHRIST will fare better in the last Judgment, than such as know it and blaspheme it.

9. Yea, God himself testifies, that *his Name is great among the Heathen*, Mal. i. 11. And we find an Heathen Emperor making a Decree, that *whosoever spake any Thing amiss of Almighty God, should be cut in Pieces, and his House made a Dunghill*, Dan. iii. 29.—And it was the first Maxim of a Heathen Philosopher, That *the highest Veneration be always paid to God*. Which is indeed the Sense of all Mankind: and to think or act otherwise, is to confound the very Order of Nature. And therefore we seldom find any mention of the Name of God in the Holy Scriptures, without some other Word joined with it, to strike our Minds with Reverence: As the *Holy Name*, the *Blessed Name*, the *Glorious Name*, the *Great and Terrible Name*. And the Jews and Turks have always treated it with profound Veneration. So that it must be an inhuman, senseless, and diabolical Fury, to contradict all Natural and Revealed Religion, and all the sober Sentiments of Mankind, by polluting and profaning it.

10. After such weighty Considerations,

tions, it might be needless, one would think, to mention any of a lower Nature; I mean the Penalty which the Law of this Land has inflicted upon the Offenders. But however, since there are so many who are unhappily dead to all Sense of those everlasting Flames which shall be the Portion of the Profane Swearer, and who are more affected with the Fear of a present Penalty, how small soever, than with the Dread of Hell hereafter; this Argument is by no Means to be neglected. The Act of Parliament (passed in the Nineteenth Year of his late Majesty's Reign) justly takes Notice "that the horrid, impious, and
" execrable Vices of profane Cursing
" and Swearing (so highly displeasing
" to Almighty God and loathsome and
" offensive to every Christian) are become so frequent and notorious, that
" unless speedily and effectually punished, they may justly provoke the Divine Vengeance to increase the many
" Calamities these Nations now labour under." And therefore it is enacted,
" That if any Person shall profanely
" Curse or Swear, and be thereof convicted on the Oath of any one Witness,
" before any Justice of the Peace, he
" shall

shall forfeit as follows :—

“ Every Day-Labourer, common Soldier, common Sailor, and common Seaman, *One Shilling*.

“ Every other Person under the Degree of a *Gentleman*, *Two Shillings*.

“ And every Person, of or above the Degree of a *Gentleman*, *Five Shillings*.

“ And in Case any Person shall after Conviction offend a second Time, he shall forfeit double; and for every other Offence after a second Conviction, treble the Sum first forfeited.”

11. Happy will they be, who by this light Infliction, are brought to a timely Sense of their Sin and Folly, and so escape everlasting Punishment in those unquenchable Flames, where the *Blasphemer* may be supposed to cry out of his parched Tongue and say, *It is justly tormented in these Flames!*

12. Upon the Whole, How is every Lover of God, of *Man*, and of the *Public Good*, bound in Conscience to oppose this vile and horrible Sin? to reprove it, to shame it, and, in all fit Circumstances, to inform the Magistrate of it, and do their utmost to banish it from human Society? For it breaks the Bounds of all that is *sacred, civil, or decent* :

cent: and it is a most high offence against God, and an Affront to all that bear the Name of *Christ*, who are by solemn Vows obliged to resent and oppose it.

13. For where this direful Sin prevails, how does it render that Place a Sort of Hell upon Earth? God is greatly honoured in the Regions above. His Angels bless him perpetually, and the Saints above praise, love, admire, and adore Him. Yea, the Birds seem, in their Way, to sing forth the Praises of their Creator, and the inanimate Creatures observe the Laws of their Creation. But wicked Men and damned Devils, blaspheme the Name of the most High God, and do him Dishonour. But let me entreat all Persons whatsoever, that have Reason and Self-Love, that they cast not themselves into this accursed Herd of Blasphemers; lest after a little Partnership with them in their Sin, they be for ever conjoined with them in their Punishment.

But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne: nor by the Earth, for it is his Footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one Hair white or black. But let your Communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil, *Matt. v. 34, 35, 36, 37.*

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